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## Introduction

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Jasmina Grković-Major, Björn Hansen, Barbara Sonnenhauser  
**Diachronic Slavonic Syntax**

# Trends in Linguistics Studies and Monographs

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## Volume 315

# Diachronic Slavonic Syntax

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The Interplay between Internal Development, Language  
Contact and Metalinguistic Factors

Edited by  
Jasmina Grković-Major  
Björn Hansen  
Barbara Sonnenhauser

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## Introduction

This volume is dedicated to the study of the causes and mechanisms of syntactic change in Slavonic languages, including internally motivated syntactic change, syntactic change under contact conditions (structural convergence, pattern replication, shift-induced interference etc.), and the influence of metalinguistic factors such as grammar writing and language ideology. Specific reference is made to the interplay of these factors in the process of syntactic change. Following up the volume ‘Diachronic Slavonic Syntax. Gradual changes in focus’ (Hansen and Grković-Major 2010), which was dedicated to the (apparent) gradualness of syntactic changes, the intermediary steps involved and the question of how these micro-changes can be detected empirically, the present volume promotes a dialogue between different approaches to the study of diachronic syntax. These approaches include, amongst others, diachronic typology, Construction Grammar, grammaticalization theory, diachronic generative syntax as well as philologically driven textual criticism. Irrespective of the particular approach, all papers strive for a solid empirical grounding of their argumentation. They thereby bring to the fore also questions concerning the limits of corpus-based analyses which arise from the – still – rather restricted historical and diachronic data bases available for most of the Slavonic languages. In this way, the present volume also contributes to discussing data-related questions.

## 1 Interplay of factors

In the shaping of linguistic patterns over time, factors located on different tiers interact in intricate ways. Thus, adequately approaching diachronic Slavonic syntax, as concerns both the individual languages and overarching patterns, requires considering causes, mechanisms and processes of change that manifest themselves on the linguistic and the metalinguistic level as well as on the level of the data basis itself:

*Linguistic factors:* The internal driving forces of syntactic change and preconditions for contact-induced syntactic changes need to be identified; these internal and external factors may counteract but also concur, possibly even reinforcing each other.

*Metalinguistic factors:* The propagation or suppression of particular structural variants as a consequence of their usage in literary documents and their handling



by descriptive and prescriptive work may influence the direction of syntactic development; this impact may be non-uniform for the different varieties of a language.

*Data related factors:* Any account of structural change is subject to limits imposed by the quantitative and qualitative availability of data on the one hand, and the implicit assumptions underlying the way they are described on the other hand; these factors may influence the explanatory power of the analysis provided.

As a prerequisite of describing the interplay of the above mentioned factors, each of them has to be studied carefully in its own right, having in mind the historical and sociolinguistic circumstances in which they were embedded. With their manifold contact languages and contact scenarios, dialectal complexity and their highly diverging standardisation histories, the Slavonic languages provide an interesting test case for the investigation of the interplay between internal development, language contact and metalinguistic factors and may serve the understanding of this intricate interaction also in a more general perspective.

## 1.1 Linguistic factors: Internal and external causes

It is well-known that language change results from two main driving forces: internal motivations leading to the (partial) restructuring of the respective systems, and external, contact-related factors triggering processes of convergence, replication, transfers etc. Among the main internal preconditions of syntactic change are instability, competition and reanalysis. Language contact as an impetus for language (re-)structuring occurs predominantly in the periods of system instability, when a foreign influence may induce a choice among several internal competing syntactic strategies. With contact persisting not only among structurally, genetically or typologically different languages, but also among closely related languages or among diatopic and diaphasic varieties of one and the same language, external and internal motivations and their consequences are, for the most part, hard to tear apart. The more so, as they may follow the same regularities, as proposed in Kuteva and Heine's (2012) 'integrative model' of grammaticalization.

When it comes to the analysis of external influences, different types of contact scenarios have to be considered, which may trigger different types of structural change in qualitative and quantitative terms, proceeding within different time spans and with different speed. The consequences of oral contact, written contact and contact in translation may be quite different from both a quantitative and qualitative point of view. For the latter scenarios the conditions for and consequences of contact are – at least partially – accessible from the documents themselves, i.e. the linguistic structures and possible metainformation available

from, e.g., glosses added by the scribes or commentaries provided by the authors. This is quite different for oral contact, for which, as a rule, only indirect evidence can be found. Moreover, oral contact differs in type and intensity, i.e. contacts in bilingual communities where both languages are preserved (with changes in one of them or both) and contacts which lead to language assimilation and shift leaving substrate patterns in the replacing language. Thomason (2001: 66–67), thus, identifies the presence or absence of imperfect learning as one of the major social predictors of the type of contact-induced change.

## **1.2 Metalinguistic factors: Selection and propagation**

In addition to linguistic factors, metalinguistic aspects need to be considered when it comes to accounting for syntactic change – in particular syntactic change that is primarily traced on the basis of written sources instead of being reconstructed. Such metalinguistic factors are easily overlooked if the focus is on the purely linguistic mechanisms described in Section 1.1. They include the selection and propagation of syntactic structures by the adherence to prestigious original languages and model texts or the selection of specific structures instead of others in the course of the bottom-up emergence of overarching norms or by way of top-down prescription, and – related to the latter – the handling of variation by descriptive and prescriptive work. Pullum (2006) classifies prescriptive claims concerning the correctness of linguistic structures on their justificatory basis, distinguishing nine principles determining ideological prescriptivism: nostalgia, classicism, authoritarianism, aestheticism, coherentism, logicism, commonsensims, functionalism and asceticism (see also Friedman 1997, 2017). Ideologically (wittingly or unwittingly) driven selection as well as prescriptive intervention and description might accelerate the propagation of minor usage patterns which exist as less frequent or stylistically restricted variants. These might in turn become prominent in the linguistic awareness of language users and may thereby, in times of restricted access to literacy, serve as role models for contemporary writers on the one hand, and disproportionally shape the linguistic perception of diachronic data in linguistic analyses on the other hand. It is thus also important to consider variation along the diatopic and diaphasic dimensions.

## **1.3 Data related factors: Data basis and analysis**

Since the factors mentioned above can be identified only based on the data at hand, i.e. on the basis of corpora of different breadth and depth, reflection

concerning the data basis needs to be included in any description of syntactic change. This brings to the fore questions concerning the explanatory power of data gained from more or less restricted corpora, i.e. questions of linguistic evidence and the data quality. Possible effects of factors such as corpus planning, adherence to tradition in language usage and linguistic description on the syntactic structures visible in the data at hand may influence the explanatory power of the analyses provided. Data-related aspects thus emerge as an important aspect in observing, describing and explaining structural development.

## 2 Relevance of Slavonic

The overall purpose of the volume is to give new insights into the development of Slavonic syntactic structures. By investigating the causes, mechanisms and processes of syntactic change prevailing in this group of languages, it addresses more general problems which have been debated in historical linguistics. The Slavonic languages possess a long documented history, their speakers have been in contact with a large number of related and non-related languages. The contact profile, thus, includes other Slavonic varieties, Greek, Latin, Baltic, Romance, Germanic, Albanian as well as Turkish and Finno-Ugric. Contact-induced phenomena have been pointed out and studied by Slavacists since the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, when Kopitar (1945 [1826]: 139) noted that “Der serbische Dialekt ist ein ganz slawischer, der Form und der Materie nach; der bulgarische ist eine slawische langue romane, die das Material von den Slaven, die Form aber von den – Albanesen, oder Walachen – entlehnt hat” [‘The Serbian dialect is completely Slavonic in form and material; the Bulgarian dialect is a Slavonic langue romane which has borrowed the material from the Slavs, but the forms from the Albanians or Vlachs’]. This paved the way for Balkan linguistics which was the first to study aspects of syntactic change from an areal perspective. The starting point of areal linguistics is generally considered to be Kristian Sandfeld’s seminal book *Balkanfilologien* from 1926 which, besides the analysis of loanwords, which was in focus in the previous works, summarized and systematized the results of the considerable research on the similarities in morphosyntax, found in the Balkan languages. In the years to come many studies were dedicated to the contact-induced syntactic phenomena in the Balkans, including the ones presenting their typology and causes (e.g. Civ’jan 1979). Other parts of the Slavonic language area have also been analysed from an areal and typological perspective, especially the ones belonging to the Circum-Baltic area. These investigations raise important questions about the relation of inherited and areal phenomena

(cf. Seržant 2015). The comparative-historical syntax of Slavonic, as a prerequisite for discerning genetic and contact-induced phenomena, has been a fruitful field of research since the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Miklosich 1865; Potebnja 1941 [1874]). The study of internal developments of Slavonic languages in a comparative Slavonic perspective in the following century offered not only the description but also laid theoretical and methodological foundations for the research (Havránek 1958; Bauer 1972). Relevant for this field of research are also the studies on inner-Slavonic syntactic typology (e.g. Mrazek 1990).

Although many relevant theoretical and methodological issues concerning internal and contact-induced syntactic development have been covered by the previous investigations, some specific aspects of syntactic change have not received much attention. First, whereas most studies on contact-induced change hitherto have focused on pairs of genetically distinct languages, this book also deals with language contact between genetically closely related languages (see also the recent books Rabus 2013 and Besters-Dilger et al. 2014). Second, it discusses the problem of language susceptibility to foreign influences under different circumstances. Third, it includes contributions that address the question of how translations can trigger syntactic change. The data range from the canonical Old Church Slavonic texts and Church Slavonic national recensions (Bulgarian, Serbian), pre-standardized Slavonic vernaculars, to transcribed oral speech of bilingual heritage (minority) speakers in Germany and Italy. In addition, it brings together diachronic studies with recent work on bilingual language use as the latter allow to zoom in on ongoing syntactic changes under the condition of intensive language contact.

### 3 Contributions

The papers in Part I deal with changes in the noun phrase. Jürgen Fuchsbauer's contribution *Some observations on the usage of adnominal genitives and datives in Middle Bulgarian Church Slavonic* investigates the usage of the two cases in Middle Bulgarian Church Slavonic literary language, taking into account semantic factors which determine it. The comparison of the original and translated works shows that, although one might expect a stronger Greek syntactic influence in the translation, the Graecizing genitive was more frequent in the original text. This indicates the impact of metalinguistic factors on the syntactic system, i.e. the role of an implicit literary language norm of the epoch.

In her article *Quantifying syntactic influence: Word order, possession and definiteness in Old Church Slavonic and Greek* Hanne Martine Eckhoff discusses

how to distinguish native from borrowed syntax if a language, such as Old Church Slavonic (OCS), is attested only in translated texts. She demonstrates that in case of OCS adnominal possessive constructions, which exhibit relative syntactic independence, an analysis of the complex interaction of different factors reveals native syntax. However, in cases of replication (OCS word order) which could be attributed to the similarity of the two systems, additional comparative data are needed.

*The decay of cases in Molise Slavonic* by Silvia Luraghi and Milena Krstić explores changes in a complex, high contact situation between a South Slavonic dialect spoken in Italy and Romance. It is shown that the expansion of prepositions in Molise Slavonic limited the usage of bare cases to the ones encoding the core syntactic arguments: the nominative, the accusative and the dative. The authors explain the causes and mechanisms of this drift toward analytism from the comparative, typological and language contact perspective. The impact of sociolinguistic conditions on linguistic variation between generations is investigated as well.

The papers in Part II focus on the verbal phrase and related topics. In her contribution *Null subjects and person in Old North Russian* Hakyung Jung examines the null subject patterns in Old North Russian within a generative framework. Basing her research on statistical data, she argues that this was a person-based system, and gives an explanation for its reduction from the 10<sup>th</sup> century to the modern period. As argued by the author, the similarities between Old and Modern Russian, Finnish and Lithuanian in this domain raise the possibility that the development of the Russian system was influenced by the Balto-Finnic substratum.

Replication patterns found in heritage languages are studied in the article *On the permeability of grammars: Syntactic pattern replications in heritage Croatian and heritage Serbian spoken in Germany* by Björn Hansen. In analysing different syntactic phenomena (valence and linking, non-canonical subject constructions, prepositional phrases, word order and agreement), the author distinguishes contact-induced grammaticalization, polysemy copying, and restructuring. This paper exhibits how heritage linguistics, revealing the mechanisms, causes and types of contact induced changes in progress can contribute to historical syntax.

Imke Mendoza's contribution *Possessive resultative constructions in Old and Middle Polish* investigates the development of possessive resultative constructions in Polish. Attested in the earliest written documents in the 14<sup>th</sup> century, they underwent comparatively few changes up to the modern times, the main one being the increase of adjacency of auxiliary and lexical elements. The author suggests two possible model languages for this construction: German, which had an impact on the spoken language, and Latin, with which Polish was in contact through the written language.

In his paper *Mechanisms of word order change in 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> century Serbian*, Slobodan Pavlović addresses the question of word order changes in the earliest vernacular written sources, discussing the distribution of enclitics, subject, predicate and object positions and the linearization of the noun phrase. He explains that the changes toward homogeneous and continuous phrasal structures and a centralized sentence are a manifestation of the drift from the non-configurational to configurational language and that this internal process in Old Serbian was intensified by the Balkan Romance influence.

The rise of discourse structuring elements based on *verba dicendi* in Croatian is presented in Sandra Birzer's contribution *Historical development and contemporary usage of discourse structuring elements based on verba dicendi in Croatian*. She establishes three periods in their diachronic path and compares Croatian with Russian and Polish, pointing out the differences between the languages. It is argued that German syntactic structures influenced the development of discourse structuring elements based on the past participle, with a possible Czech impact which reinforced the consolidation of the pattern in Croatian.

Part III is focused on complex sentence structures. In her paper *The status and origin of the accusativus cum infinitivo construction in Old Church Slavonic* Marina Kurešević examines the origin of the accusative with infinitive in the first Slavonic literary language in a typological and comparative perspective. It is argued that two basic semantic types of this complement structure, one with subjunctive and the other with indicative meaning, evolved independently. The first one is seen as a genuine Slavonic pattern, the other one as a bookish neologism, based on internal language motivation and supported by Greek sentence patterns.

Björn Wiemer's contribution *On triangulation in the domain of clause linkage and propositional marking* introduces the concept of triangulation as an approach to the study of structural features shared between areally and/or genealogically related languages. This holistic concept covers various procedures applied in the research of such phenomena from an areal, genealogical and universal perspective. Its application is illustrated by the case studies of complementizers marking the suspension of assertiveness in clausal complementation: South Slavonic *da* and its North (East and West) Slavonic counterpart *jakoby*.

The paper *The development of perception verb complements in the Serbian language* by Jasmina Grković-Major presents the changes in complementation strategies in typological, comparative and areal perspective. It is argued that the development of complement clauses was induced by the drift toward a transitive, configurational system. In this gradual process, going through the phase of instability with several competing clausal patterns, Old Serbian was susceptible to foreign influences, which directed further development, as shown by the expansion of *da*-clauses into the indicative domain under Romance influence.

In his contribution *A tale of two pathways: On the development of relative clause chaining in East Slavonic* Andrii Danylenko studies the genesis of relative clauses in East Slavonic, taking into account areal, diachronic, and socio-typological criteria. Distinguishing two developmental pathways, one leading to paratactic subordination, the other to hypotactic subordination, he claims that the former is in correlation with the analytic tendency in the morphosyntax of a language, while the latter is in correlation with the synthetic one, not only in East Slavonic but in other Indo-European languages as well.

Barbara Sonnenhauser analyses the development of relative clauses with the indeclinable *ki* and adjectival *kateri* in her paper *Relativisation strategies in Slovene: Diachrony between language use and language description*. She presents the complex history of the relativisation markers from the earliest written documents to contemporary Slovene, discussing several factors which had been at work in this process: (i) language internal development, i.e. general Slavonic tendencies, (ii) language contacts with German, both as regards the language users and those describing the language, and (iii) metalinguistic factors.

The individual contributions add to the aim of promoting recent developments in the field, both theoretical and methodological, especially as concerns corpus based studies. Accordingly, the case studies gathered in this volume are data-driven, and the analyses are based on sound empirical research conducted on the corpora available for the particular research questions. Dealing with a wide range of phenomena, the contributions reveal an effort to holistically capture and explain the complex interaction of different linguistic and social factors causing and directing syntactic change. We hope that they will contribute to a better understanding of the manifold forces shaping syntactic patterns and stimulate further research in this domain.

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